Biological & Medical Serials

Ophthalmic Literature

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Vol. VII. SEPTEMBER, 1917. No. 9

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PRICE FIVE DOLLARS PER YEAR, IN ADVANCE

Published Monthly by EDWARD JACKSON, 818 Majestic Building, Denver, Colorado, U. S. A.

Entered as second-class matter November 6, 1912, at the Postoffice at Denver, Colorado, under the Act of March 3, 1879.

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Herrick Book and Stationery Company

934 15th Street Denver, Colorado

Ophthalmic Literature

VOL. VII. SEPTEMBER, 1917. NO. 9.

Edited by EDWARD JACKSON. Assisted by WILLIAM H. CRISP.

THE INDEX OF OPHTHALMOLOGY.

It is proposed to carry this index over into the new journal; and it is desired that when this is done it shall be in a form most convenient for those who may use it. The plans for the new journal are being worked out in detail. It is desirable that every suggestion for improvement of the "Index" should be sent in now. To invite such suggestions the subject is here discussed.

The striking point in the form of the "index" is its arrangement under certain heads, "Diagnosis", "Therapeutics", etc. This is in contrast with the plan followed in many medical journals of arranging titles or abstracts under the name of the journal from which they are taken, or the language in which the original paper was published. The topical arrangement will be maintained, for it is certain that a paper about some subject in ophthalmology is of interest chiefly for the subject it is written about, and not because it appeared in a particular journal or a certain language.

However, there is room for difference of opinion as to what particular headings should be used. Should there be more of them or fewer? Should particular headings be changed? One who was making a special study of the movements of the pupil, might find it more convenient to have a heading devoted to these alone. Yet the heading "Anterior Chamber and Pupil" usually has but few titles to be placed under it. Sometimes these smaller departments, like that for the "Vitreous", or "Comparative Ophthalmology", show no papers at all for a month. To increase the number of headings unnecessarily would surely be a mistake. If there are carefully considered suggestions as to what the headings shall be they will be most welcome.

The plan of giving each title a separate paragraph will be continued. This requires a little more paper than printing a series of titles in a solid column. But it makes it easier to find any particular paper looked for. The "Index Medicus" formerly printed in solid column. At the beginning of the current volume it gave up that plan for the one used in Ophthmalic Literature. A paper is sought on account of its contents, more than because a certain person has written it; but the author's name is such a valuable means of identifying a particular paper that it is well worth while to print it in heavy-faced type, that will quickly attract the eye.

As to details regarding the papers noticed in the "Index", the difficulties are great. It would be quite helpful if an index could indicate the value of each of the papers noticed in it. But at the best only the compiler's impression, formed from a hasty glance at the paper, could be given in a current index; and the compiler's estimate might be far from correct. It is easy to state if the paper is illus-

trated and to what extent, and this is done. It has been suggested, too, that the number of pages the paper occupies might be given. This could be done but it would furnish a poor indication of its value. It would be possible also to indicate whether the reference is to the original paper, or an abstract. But this, too, does not indicate its value, since an abstract is sometimes better to consult than the original paper. Would it in this connection be a help to include, with the name of each journal quoted, the name of the city in which it is published?

Another practical question is, Should the index carry with it in each issue some explanation of how to use it? Or is this sufficiently obvious from the index itself? If some such explanation is desirable more often than once in each volume, suggestions of what this explanation should be, or queries about what are not clear without it are in order. If any reader has been thinking critically upon this subject of the index, this is the time that his criticism will be most helpful.

WAR RESTRICTIONS.

These still contract to a greater and greater extent the sources of supply of Ophthalmic Literature. It will be found that in this number we have noticed six papers of German origin. These titles are all obtained second hand through the French journals. So far as we know there have been no German periodicals devoted to ophthalmology received in America for about a year; while the output of ophthalmic literature in French and Italian has been greatly restricted.

In the last report on the "Progress of Ophthalmology" in the **Archives of Ophthalmology,** the literature is drawn wholly from English, French and American sources, the majority from the latter. This is the more striking since one of the editors is Carl Hess, of Munich; and of the twenty names of collaborators who are supposed to prepare this report, 17 are of European ophthalmologists, and 12 of them German.

In the last number of the **Index Medicus** there is no allusion to any ophthalmic paper from Germany; and the current volume of the **Journal of the American Medical Association** contains no mention of current medical literature from Germany.

BOOK NOTICES.

R. H. Elliot, London. **The Indian Operation of Couching for Cataract.** 8vo, 106 pages, 45 illustrations, 7 plates. London: H. K. Lewis and Company.

This volume incorporates the Hunterian Lectures delivered before the Royal College of Surgeons early in the present year. It opens with a chapter on the history of couching from the writings of the Alexandrian surgeon, Philoxenes, 270 B. C. to the most recent writings and discussions upon it. To this chapter is appended a bibliography of some 32 titles. Then comes a chapter on the technic of the operation, particularly as witnessed and described by Dr. Ekambaram, and one on the Indian Coucher and his habits.

The statistical chapter is based on 780 cases, examined at Madras by Col. Elliot and his successor Major Kirkpatrick. Of these nearly 7 per cent were seen in the first month and nearly

18 per cent in the first six months after operation; for couching still goes on in India. It is a subject of great economic importance, for of these cases less than 22 per cent were capable of corrected vision, equal one-tenth. The comparison with cataract extraction showed an avoidable loss of 60 per cent of eyes submitted to couching.

But the permanent scientific interest of this book lies chiefly in the chapter devoted to the pathologic anatomy of couched eyes, the subject of the Hunterian lectures. This is based upon 54 eyes removed and hardened in 5 per cent formalin. To illustrate the conditions found in these eyes, are devoted 6 of the 7 half-tone plates, including 36 illustrations. The displaced lens is shown in a variety of positions, and a wide range of injuries to other structures are exhibited.

Whether the operation of couching should now be resorted to under any circumstances seems doubtful. But any ophthalmologist, before undertaking it, should certainly read and ponder the contents of this book, and appreciate the full significance of this passage: "From the time of Celsus onwards, surgeons who have had large experience in couching have warned their disciples that it is an operation much more easy to undertake than to carry to a successful technical issue, and have cautioned them against venturing on it until they have seen is performed many times at the hands of an expert."

American Encyclopedia and Dictionary of Ophthalmology, volume 11, edited by Casey A. Wood, assisted by a large staff of collaborators. Pages 8023 to 8904. Cleveland Press, Chicago, 1917.

This volume brings the work to Ophthalmology, History of, the section on it seeming to be completed, page 8904. Although a larger number of definitions and short articles beginning with N and Ophth. are included the bulk of the volume is taken up, by three articles on Ocular Muscles, 229 pages; Oblique Astigmatism, 50 pages, and Ophthalmology, History of, 380 pages. The section on Ocular muscles began in volume 10, and is continued to page 8253, making in all 368 pages. The larger part of it is signed by "G. C. S.", but there are one hundred pages on Operations on the Ocular Muscles, signed "E. J.". The article on Oblique Astigmatism is also written by G. C. Savage. It deals rather extensively with the effect on the retinal image of cylinders obliquely placed, and with the modifications of ocular position and movement associated therewith.

The history of ophthalmology is a subject hitherto neglected in the English literature; and this account of it, taken with the biographic sketches scattered throughout the Encyclopedia, constitutes the most extended work upon it yet published in the language. But such long sections in the encyclopedia emphasize the need there will be for an index covering the whole of this work. A monograph of 300 to 400 pages, published without any table of contents or alphabetic index, would deserve sharp criticism. A group of such monographs is far from furnishing an ideal book for reference.

Others of the more important articles are those on Myopia by the Editor, on Neurology of the Eye, by Walter R. Parker, and on Operative Skill in Ophthalmic Surgery, by Albert E. Bulsen, Jr.

Transactions of the American Academy of Ophthalmology and Oto-Laryngology, 1916, 8vo, 383 pages, 9 plates and 43 illustrations in the text. Published by the Secretary, Chicago.

The part of this volume relating to ophthalmology comprises 204 pages. It differs from its predecessors in being better illustrated. Of the 9 plates, three are very creditable reproductions in colors of characteristic clinical appearances in cases reported. The papers here published are given under their appropriate heads in the Index of Ophthalmology. This volume is on the whole very creditable to

those who have had to do with its preparation. But it would be more pleasing and convenient for reference if each page had a heading stating the author's name, or topic discussed; and the two-page index is quite inadequate.

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Abstracts From Foreign Journals

Maggiore, L. Fly Larva in Episcleral Tissue. (Annali di Ottalmologia e Clinica Oculistica, 40th year, page 107).

For eight months the patient, a small boy, had been treated by a number of physicians for a circumscribed inflammation in the upper segment of the scleral conjunctiva of the left eye, without discharge. Finally the doctor and the family noticed that a transparent cyst had formed near the upper sclero-corneal limbus. The upper quadrant of the bulbar conjunctiva showed a large number of dilated veins, superficial and deep. The conjunctiva was elevated; and in the deeper tissue, adherent to the sclera, was a roundish structure about three millimeters in diameter and about one centimeter long, in shape approximating a microscopic cigar. Its contents were of crystalline transparency. At first a diagnosis was made of lymphatic cyst of the subconjunctival tissue; but minute inspection with the binocular microscope revealed the presence of an encysted parasite, disposed in imbricated rings. The organism was removed intact with the point of a knife. Its actual measurement after removal proved to be eight by two millimeters, with tapering ends. It was found to be a fly larva, but the exact variety was not determined.

In every previous case in which larvae have been found present in the eye or its adnexa, the seat of the larva has been the conjunctival mucosa, with the exception of cases described by three authors, in which the larva was encountered in the anterior chamber. Two further points of interest about the case reported by Maggiore were the absence of an inflammatory process and the resemblance of the condition to an ordinary lymphatic cyst of the conjunctiva.

Ovio, E. Visual Illusions of Red. (Annali di Ottalmologia e Clinica Oculistica, New Series, First Year, Page 1.)

While seated in a railway train, the author noticed that after having looked at the surrounding country for some time, upon looking at a book in his hands the black type appeared to be bordered on one side by red, having thus the appearance of so-called shaded characters, but shaded with a bright red. The phenomenon lasted a couple of minutes. On the same day, and subsequent days, under the same conditions, the phenomenon was reproduced, although not every time. From this beginning Ovio considers the general subject of visual illusions of red, referring to the chromatic phenomena seen in revolving figures; and discussing the views of various authors as to the existence of a different excitability of the eye for various colors, the phenomena of the insolated eye, the color of the ocular media, and the interpretation of the chromatic phenomenon observed by himself, with its possible explanations.

He comes to the following conclusions:

1. The most plausible hypothesis to explain the chromatic phenomena at the margins of black and white objects in movement is that of a varying excitability of the eye for different colors. This hypothesis is especially supported by the phenomena of persistence of images, by the phenomena presented by secondary images and by the behavior of the chromatic minimum. It is not to be excluded that in some cases the chromatic aberration of the eye may enter as a factor for the production of the phenomenon.

2. The vision of red of the so-called insolated eye is due to the light which penetrates through the walls of the eyeball, which acting for some time lowers slightly the sensibility for red. By this lowering, objective white light gives the sensation of green. Black objects observed in these conditions appear red for two reasons: (a) Because in correspondence with their images the retina which is not acted upon

by pupillary objective light has an after impression of the red sclerotic light, and has the sensation of red. (b) Because the green sensation of those parts upon which the white light falls gives by contrast an impulse to the sensation of red on the parts upon which the white light does not fall, which are those upon which are depicted the images of the black objects. The insolated eye has therefore, from the black and white impression, a double sensation of red and of green. The first, on those parts of the retina where the objective pupillary impression of light is absent or weak, is predominatingly the red sclerotic impression; the second, in the region where the objective pupillary light impression is strong, is overwhelmed by the latter.

3. The eye which looks through colored glasses is under distinctly different conditions from those of the insolated eye, for in the latter the primary chromatic impression is endoptic, and through the pupil light of any color can reach the retina, while in the case of the colored glasses only pupillary light penetrates into the eye, and this is prevailingly of the color of the glass employed.

However, it is also possible to have a double sensation with colored glasses, that is to say of the color of the glass employed, and of the color complementary to this. The first sensation is received when the direct impression predominates; the second sensation when the individual succeeds in forming an abstraction from the direct impression. By means of such an abstraction it is possible to see, through a colored glass, objects in their own color; and by paying close attention it is also possible to see upon these objects the color complementary to that of the glass employed.

4. The phenomenon of the red margin seen by Ovio on black characters is presumably a special manifestation of these marginal chromatic phenomena which seem to be due to a different excitability of the eye for various colors; and Ovio would explain it with a special tremor of the fatigued eye, analogous to the intentional tremor of fatigued fingers and hands.

Kirkpatrick, H. Goggles for Use After Cataract Extraction. (Report of Government Ophthalmic Hospital, Madras, 1916. p. 11.)

To protect the eye after extraction of cataract Kirkpatrick has used as a shield a special form of goggles, made of aluminum accurately shaped to the orbital margin. The two shields are held together by a piece of tape which serves as a bridge, and kept in position by a tape passed round the head above the ears. Each has a large opening in it. For the eye operated on this opening contains a pane of amber glass, while before the unoperated eye it is left free. This sort of protection has been substituted for the dressing the day after operation. These shields have been in use about four months without any bad results and "the eyes appear to be quieter than those under a bandage. In addition to allowing free drainage they have the advantage that the patient is able to see and find his way about by himself shortly after the operation, and this not only exercises a favorable influence on his mental condition, but renders him less likely to interfere with the cover in order to see how his vision is improving, or to find his way about. Patients are not confined to bed after the second day."

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